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From: [Pastula, Julianne \(MICRC\)](#)
To: [Badelson1](#)
Subject: FW: MICRC Weekend Clips 1210-1221 and MIRS Articles
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Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

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Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 10:23 AM
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Subject: MICRC Weekend Clips 1210-1221 and MIRS Articles

Hello MICRC,

Here are the clips from the weekend and MIRS articles. You will need to access the clips through the State's network.

 [MICRC 1210-1221.pdf](#)

All the best!

--Edward

These Redistricting Maps Are The Favorites At This Point

With two weeks before the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commissioners (**ICRC**) make their final choices on the legislative and congressional maps for the next ten years, members are starting to see some clear trends.

Commissioners will hold one more hearing next week (10 a.m. Dec. 16 at the Cadillac Place), but the public hasn't been bashful about sharing their feelings.

Over the course of the last two weeks, **MIRS** has spoken with a majority of the 13 commissioners and the overriding theme is they would prefer to pass out maps they

worked on collaboratively for Congress, state Senate and state House.

They are not dead set against voting for an individual commissioner's map, but that is not their preference.

"Those were the ones where we worked together," said Commissioner Dustin **WITJES**. "For two months straight, we had the Commission and the experts working together. We know why we did certain things as opposed maybe an individual commissioner working on a map on their own."

An individual map would need a lot of explanation and outside support before it could generate much interest, Witjes projected. It's legally possible an individual map could be proposed when the Commissioners meet for decision making Dec. 28.

Any new collaborative map would need to go through another 45-day public comment window. That's not something the Commissioners don't want to do.

An individual map would not need to go through the same public scrutiny. It could, theoretically, be introduced and adopted on Dec. 28.

But that's not anything the Commissioners want to do, either. They'd rather not adopt a final map without public screening.

This shifts the attention back to the collaborative maps. Three each for Congress, state Senate and state House are out for public comment. The differences between them aren't all that marked.

Also, while the 13-member commission includes four Republicans, four Democrats and five independents, partisanship has not been a factor up to this point. Differences and tensions among members have been based on regional issues as opposed to Republican-Democratic rubs.

Commissioners work reasonably well with one another. Commissioner Rhonda **LANGE** has been a wild card in that she has never shown up to an **ICRC** meeting in person and is comfortable being a dissenter in the face of consensus. Lange also declines media interviews and keeps her long-range views close to the vest.

One of the challenges for commissioners is sifting through which comments are coming from individuals and which ones are coming from folks being put up by a special interest, said Commissioner Doug **CLARK** Jr.

Particularly during the closing days of the map drawing, commissioners heard public comments that sounded remarkably similar to another testifier. It raised the

question among members as to which maps are genuinely sparking strong feelings and which special interests were simply better organized.

Still, it's hard not to count comments or see trends and, after speaking with multiple commissioners, a consensus theme, at this point is the following:

Congressional

The major differences among the Chestnut, Birch and Apple maps are how the Grand Rapids area is configured.

"Chestnut" connects Grand Rapids (GR) with northern Ottawa County, Grand Haven and Muskegon. "Birch" connects GR with all of Kent County, eastern Ottawa County (Hudsonville and Coopersville) and western Ionia (Belding and Lake Odessa). "Apple" connects GR with Kalamazoo.

As of now, Chestnut and Birch are seen as the favorites, with a slight edge toward Chestnut. The GR-Kalamazoo connection is getting panned as a little too manufactured. Outside of a shared TV media market, the two communities don't have a lot in common.

In general, the Chestnut and Birch have gotten favorable reviews, so it's highly unlikely an individual map would need to be considered.

The map that's chosen will have major implications in West Michigan, where U.S. Rep. Fred UPTON and Bill HUIZENGA have been drawn into the same district in all three. Depending on if Upton runs for re-election or not will have a domino effect on what happens to Huizenga, U.S. Rep. John MOOLENAAR and maybe even U.S. Rep. Peter MEIJER.

State Senate

Ann Arbor and Jackson County are the major points of differences among the Cherry, Palm and Linden maps. If any map generates strong partisan dividing lines, it would be in the state senate.

The Palm maps puts Ann Arbor and the surrounding communities into a single district, creating a heavy Democratic district. Cherry cracks Ann Arbor in half and stretches two districts vertically into Jackson and Calhoun counties to generate partisan fairness.

Linden is the compromise. It cracks Ann Arbor, but Jackson County is kept together with the northern half, creating a more lean-Dem district.

Clark, a Republican, said he prefers the Palm district, but the public tends to

support Cherry and Linden, with the latter getting slightly more support. Clark conceded that he'd prefer a collaborative map than an individual map so, again, one of the three maps is still the most likely scenario.

State House

The feedback on Pine, Magnolia and Hickory is that the public isn't crazy about any of them. Hickory seems to be the least objectionable, but it's more of a "lesser than three evils" scenario.

The differences among the three maps center around western Oakland County, Livingston and Washtenaw counties, but -- again -- it's not anything that's creating a substantial uproar.

The numerous jagged Detroit-suburb districts aren't being universally embraced and that's a constant among all three maps. These maps were the last to be drawn and were done under a serious time crunch.

Some odd configurations ended up emerging as a result. Allegan County (population 118,000) has pieces of six state House districts in all three maps when it could conceivably be its own district minus about 20,000.

While southern Lake Michigan folks wanted a "Lakeshore district," the optics of a rope-shaped district snaking from the Indiana line to Saugatuck is a little jarring to the eye.

In a city of 600,000 residents, Detroit does not have a single House district in any of the maps that is entirely within the city boundaries.

Of all the maps, this one will be the biggest issue because nobody really loves any of the options. It's possible a commissioner tries to craft a better map, but it must be his or her work. The Commission has recoiled at the thought of rubber stamping ANY special interest map, even if it's under the name of an individual commissioner.

Stay tuned on this one.

Court Action

Finally, keep in mind, whatever the maps are, the ICRC will be sued by at least one entity if not several. A court could tell the Commission to go back to the drawing board on one, some or all of the maps.

A federal court could conceivably draw its own map based on its interpretation of the U.S. Voting Rights Act or it could order the existing legislative maps to be used

for another cycle.

Three Questions For Commissioner Eid

One of the main architects of the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission's (ICRC) maps has been Anthony EID, a 28-year-old Chaldean and Lebanese American who is studying to become an orthopedic surgeon.

A former student body President at Wayne State University, Eid took the lead on crafting the first congressional map, a product widely praised in mid-Michigan, southern Michigan, Ann Arbor and several other parts of the state.

During a recent interview, MIRS asked Eid several questions, the answers of three of which are paraphrased below.

1. Explain the reasoning behind connecting the city of Detroit with suburban communities in the legislative districts as opposed to drawing Detroit-only districts?

A: Early in the process, the ICRC's advisors and other redistricting commissioners flagged how current Detroit-based legislative districts are "packed." African Americans, in some cases, make up 90% of some districts, which dilutes their overall voting power.

The goal was to "unpack" Detroit. The belief was that by creating districts made up of 35%-40% Black districts, more Black candidates would have a greater opportunity to be part of the legislative process.

Under the three House and three Senate maps, the ICRC created a combined 28 "opportunity districts" as opposed to the current 17 "majority-minority" districts. The ICRC's legal staff assured the Commission the strategy complied with the U.S. Voting Rights Act.

2. What was the most challenging part of the state to draw?

A: The city of Midland and Midland County. How Dow's hometown should be drawn was a constant source of debate, with seemingly half of commentators wanting Midland in with Bay City and Saginaw and the other half wanting Midland in with the rest of the county.

Doing both for legislative districts wasn't an option. For the state House maps, Midland and Midland County are a single district in every map. For the state Senate maps, the city of Midland and parts of the county are in with Bay City and Saginaw.

For Congress, two maps have the city of Midland in with Bay City, Saginaw and Flint and Midland County with a geographically enormous mid-Michigan district.